# VRS COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2013 – 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM
WOODBURY VRS OFFICE / HUDSON CONFERENCE ROOM

### **SESSION NOTES:**

### **Committee Objective**

The purpose of the VRS Community Rehabilitation Program Advisory Committee is to provide strategic advice and consultation to DEED/VRS on topics and issues affecting the mutual provision of DEED/VRS and CRP/LUV services to Minnesotans with disabilities. Our efforts to understand issues and to work collaboratively will build and nurture the capacity of Minnesota's rehabilitation community to advance the employment, independent living and community integration of Minnesotans with disabilities.

Specifically, the VRS Community Rehabilitation Program Advisory Committee will:

- Represent the perspectives and interests of CRP/LUVs in advancing rehabilitation and employment issues while fostering dialogue and engagement on critical issues throughout the greater rehabilitation community
- Provide strategic level advice and consultation to DEED/VRS on matters affecting CRP/LUVs
- Identify key topics and issues affecting CRP/LUVs and DEED/VRS
- Consider input from subject matter experts in issues affecting economic development, state demographics / population trends, and promising practices
- Engage in active reflection, spirited discussion and strategic dialogue on critical topics affecting CRP/LUVs and DEED/VRS services to persons with disabilities in Minnesota
- Provide a forum for the review and discussion of critical VRS and CRP service delivery topics including, but not limited to: current service delivery practices; new and emerging service needs; identifying best practices; and the consideration of statewide service needs and resources
- Promote innovative service practices to accelerate the adoption of best practices at a systems level that fosters equitable access to quality services on a statewide basis

**2013 Community Partner Members** (listed alphabetically): Becky Bazzare, Laura Bealey, Gil Bessard, Steve Brink, Heather Deutschlaender, Mike Harper, Dan Meyers, Julie Peterschick, Rachel Praught, Lori Sterner, Sara Sundeen, and Leslie Swartling

VRS Members: Becky Johnson, Peg Killen, Chris McVey, Roland Root, Dee Torgerson,

and Jeri Werner

**Sponsor:** Kim Peck, VRS Director

**Co-leaders:** Chris McVey, David Sherwood-Gabrielson and Jan Thompson

Facilitator: Holly Johnson

**2013 Schedule:** Jan 25, Feb 22, Apr 26, Jun 28, Sep 27, Oct 25, and Dec 6.

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## February 22, 2013 Session Objectives:

- \* Provide a conduit for sharing relevant, important and timely updates and information for the benefit of vocational rehabilitation community and consumers
- ★ Facilitate review and secure approval for 2013 VRS CRP Advisory Committee charter
- Create a shared understanding of what the DISCOVERY process entails the content, the language and the framework

**February 2013 Attendees** (*listed alphabetically*): Becky Bazzarre, Laura Bealey, Gil Bessard, Steve Brink, Heather Deutschlaender, Mike Harper, Becky Johnson, Peg Killen, Dan Meyers, Chris McVey, Kim Peck, Julie Peterschick, Roland Root, David Sherwood-Gabrielson, Lori Sterner, Sara Sundeen, Jan Thompson, and Jeri Werner

Not in attendance: Rachel Praught, Leslie Swartling, and Dee Torgerson

Guests: John Fisher, Anne Paulson, Abbie Wells-Herzog, and Megan Zeilinger-Henjum

Facilitator: Holly Johnson

# **Agenda Topics:**

- 1. Welcome / Overview
- 2. Vocational Rehabilitation Community Topics
- 3. Part I: DISCOVERY Process Training
- 4. Working Lunch Topic: Walgreens REDI Training
- 5. Part II: DISCOVERY Process Training
- 6. Wrap Up/Adjourn

### **Meeting Highlights:**

- The committee reviewed and approved a 2013 VRS CRP Advisory Committee charter.
- Trainer Megan Zeilinger-Henjum provided the committee training on the DISCOVERY Process. The vocational rehabilitation community is experiencing a rapid and high level of interest in the model by some counties and advocacy groups.
- The committee discussed potential CRP/LUVs opportunities associated with the Walgreens REDI training.

### **Next Steps:**

- **DOCUMENT SESSION NOTES:** Documentation and communication of session notes for key audiences including committee, VRS organization and CRP partners.
- SECURE FINAL SIGNATURES FOR 2013 CHARTER: The signatures for the three
  members unable to attend the February meeting will be secured to finalize the charter.
- DISCOVERY IN MINNESOTA: The committee will provide strategic advice and guidance
  on the development of a statewide approach to providing DISCOVERY assessment and
  placement services. Abbie Wells-Herzog and Anne Paulson will provide leadership of a
  committee sub team focused on this work.
- WALGREENS REDI TRAINING: Marci Jasper will follow-up on the advisory's question
  on Ticket to Work. Marci and John Fisher will develop an information sheet on the
  Walgreens REDI training and provide to both the CRP Advisory Committee and the
  Community Outreach Team to get the word out and encourage CRP/LUV participation.
- APRIL VR COMMUNITY SUCCESS STORY Becky Bazzarre will provide April's story.
- NEXT MEETING: Next meeting is Friday, April 26<sup>th</sup>.

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### Welcome and Overview

Committee member Lori Sterner provided the opening community partnership success story.

# **Vocational Rehabilitation Community Topics**

Updates included the following:

❖ Federal sequestration of funds: VRS is continuing to prepare for potential impacts that are scheduled to take effect on March 1st with the federal sequestration of funds in 2013. Without congressional resolution, the current estimate is an approximately 5% impact or a little over \$2 million reduction in funding to VRS in the current funding year.

## ❖ DEED/VRS updates:

The new Deputy Commissioner position created for the Workforce Development division is expected to begin February 25<sup>th</sup>. Cynthia Bauerly has been named to that new role within DEED. Bauerly, who grew up in Minnesota, comes from her job as a commissioner of the Federal Election Commission in Washington, D.C. VRS will report into Deputy Commissioner Bauerly as part of Workforce Development.

VRS Director Kim Peck has already provided information to, and corresponded with, the new Deputy Commissioner to help provide background given the legislative session underway. Kim is scheduled to meet with Deputy Commissioner Bauerly on her first day regarding plans and preparations developed in response to the looming federal sequestration.

### Spring Community Partnership Meetings Schedule:

VRS Community Partnerships Director David Sherwood-Gabrielson announced the dates for the spring meetings as follows:

- Northern Region April 16<sup>th</sup>
- Southern Region May 1<sup>st</sup>
- Metro Region May 15<sup>th</sup>

### CRP updates:

### Dan Meyers -

 Bruce Bester, Opportunity Partners' CFO for the past 40 years, is retiring and a successor has been selected. Alice Johnson will be leaving Courage Center and assuming the CFO position in the near future.

### Peq Killen

 The new Washington County East Metro Placement Partnership is preparing to have their first meeting.

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# 2013 VRS CRP Advisory Committee Charter

Committee Co-Leader David Sherwood-Gabrielson reviewed the proposed 2013 VRS CRP Advisory Committee charter. The charter provides a concise description of the committee's purpose along with key elements including membership, scope, team process guidelines, roles, communication plan and external dependencies. Each year the committee reviews the previous year's charter and makes any relevant updates and edits prior to signifying their commitment for the current year through signatures to the approved charter.

Upon review, the committee approved the 2013 charter and those in attendance added their commitment signatures. The remaining three signatures will be secured as soon as the next opportunity presents.

# Strategic Topic: DISCOVERY Process Training

In January, the committee engaged in an initial advisory dialogue focused on sharing introductory information and exploring how to proceed with the rapid emergence of DISCOVERY assessment and placement process. The vocational rehabilitation community is experiencing high level of interest in the DISCOVERY model by some counties and advocacy groups notably those representing persons on the autism spectrum. At the end of the initial dialogue, the committee voiced interest in participating in a four hour training on the basics of DISCOVERY. Co-leaders committed to seeking a trainer for the February meeting.

Megan Zeilinger-Henjum of Train Another Way, LLC provided an overview of the DISCOVERY process framework for the committee at the February meeting. DISCOVERY is a non-traditional, community-based and strength based process that assumes everyone who wants to work - can work. The process begins in the home and ends with employment options that 'make sense' for the individual. DISCOVERY relies on 'customized employment' strategies to gain paid, regular work.

DISCOVERY origins come from the Person Centered Planning/Career Planning approach and have evolved with inputs from Marc Gold & Associates, the University of Montana Rural Institute and the Griffin-Hammis Associates' Discovering Personal Genius model.

While DISCOVERY can be used for everyone, it was designed for individuals with the most complex disabilities. It can be a useful tool for people who:

- have little insight when it comes to choosing a career
- struggle with more traditional assessments
- struggle with current 'comparative hiring' practices i.e. interview skills, online applications, etc.

The trainer walked the committee through the five basic stages of DISCOVERY and shared a number of examples. As part of the training discussion, VRS members talked about how they have modified the model to fit within the VRS service delivery structure. A number of CRPs are exploring and/or beginning to use the model. The committee talked about DISCOVERY as an additional option in the 'tool kit' for working with individuals with significant disabilities seeking competitive employment. There continues to be interest in gathering and evaluating research on outcomes to identify who benefits from the model and

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the levels of benefit that can be achieved through DISCOVERY. VRS is working on a process for collecting and evaluating data in Minnesota to assess the effectiveness of the model with VRS consumers.

### **Moving Forward with DISCOVERY**

Kim Peck reiterated her January request that the VRS CRP Advisory Committee assist in developing a systems level approach and infrastructure to support understanding and application of the DISCOVERY model/process in Minnesota.

VRS Specialists Abbie Wells-Herzog and Anne Paulson will continue to work on integrating the DISCOVERY model into the Minnesota VRS service structure. Advisory members assisting Abbie and Anne in that process are Heather Deutschlaender, Peg Killen, Becky Johnson, Dan Meyers, and Lori Sterner. Acting as a committee subgroup, they will bring back updates and recommendations to the full committee. A VRS work group is drafting a Project Charter for DISCOVERY to provide a project plan and framework for our work with the model. The Advisory Committee subgroup will be working with the VRS work group to develop the Project Charter for DISCOVERY.

# Walgreens REDI Training

VRS Program Specialist Marci Jasper and CRP member Dan Meyers provided an overview of the Walgreens REDI Initiative over the lunch break. REDI stands for Retail Employees with Disabilities Initiative (REDI) and is a program developed by Walgreens to provide retail skills to 'externs' or trainees with a variety of disabilities. Walgreens was named 2012 Employer of the Year by the U.S. Business Leadership Network (USBLN), a national non-profit, non-partisan business-to-business network promoting workplaces, marketplaces and supply chains where people with disabilities are included. Walgreens received this honor for its continued commitment to helping people with disabilities develop productive and successful careers.

Walgreens launched the REDI program nationally in May 2012. The first phase of REDI includes parts of Arizona, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Washington and Wisconsin, with plans to reach all states by the end of 2013. The program works in partnership with agencies within a community to provide job coaches who can help externs gain skills and the opportunity for future employment in retail businesses. At the conclusion of the training, externs who successfully complete the program receive a certificate of completion and have the opportunity to apply for openings at Walgreens or with other retail recruiters outside of Walgreens.

A REDI session occurs at the store level and currently trains a target of three candidates per session for up to 120 hours. Depending on the store needs/demands, this can occur over a period of 4-8 weeks. Each store works with an agency job coach who is trained by store personnel on each of the jobs/tasks to become proficient at the fundamentals of working in a Walgreens store. The job coach then works directly with the externs to guide them through a series of both classroom and in-store trainings to build skills, store knowledge and interpersonal skills. Job coaches are typically employees of local Community Rehabilitation Program partners who provide occupational skills training services to VRS clients who participate in training.

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Dan Meyers is currently completing training as a job coach for Opportunity Partners and shared his positive experiences with the committee. He encouraged other CRPs and LUVs to get involved in the program within their communities.

Kim Peck stated that VRS has decided to prevail upon the greater CRP/LUV community across Minnesota to explore and participate in the program rather than follow other states' VRS agencies who have opted to select the CRP providers who can participate. With this open process, Kim said it will be important that CRP/LUVs step up and fully tap the local opportunities provided by Walgreens so that Minnesota continues to build employer engagement and provide the broadest possible range of employment opportunities.

The committee talked about ways to get the word out on the REDI program. Ideas generated for building statewide and local awareness and participation include:

- 1. Sending out the link with the Walgreens REDI program information
- 2. Encouraging local partnership meetings to share REDI program information
- 3. Potentially explore connecting Walgreens REDI program founder Randy Lewis with the broader VR Community on a regional and/or statewide basis

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### **KEY MESSAGES FROM TODAY**

# **↓** Important Messages for the Greater Vocational Rehabilitation Community:

- With its rapid emergence, the DISCOVERY model offers additional possibilities for serving people with complex and significant disabilities. Families are hearing about DISCOVERY and requesting these services. As partners in Minnesota's vocational rehabilitation community, we are committed to learning more about DISCOVERY as a vocational model to see how it might be effectively added to our existing service offerings.
- Currently, we believe there is a wide range of understanding and application of the new model/process. DISCOVERY is not necessarily linear nor assembly line in its approach. The committee believes there is a great opportunity to educate themselves and interested staff on DISCOVERY as a 'different' way of providing assessment services.
- As a community, we seek to work together to address important opportunities and questions related to DISCOVERY such as:
  - a. increasing system service capacity around DISCOVERY
  - b. developing statewide, regional and local approaches
  - c. assisting counselors in service expansion to include DISCOVERY
  - d. building strong connections with individual counties for services
  - e. ensuring integrity for this new model (e.g. IPS 'fidelity standards')
  - f. securing funding for the process
  - g. meeting CARF reporting requirements
- The Walgreens REDI program is an excellent example of business engagement in expanding career exploration and training for people with disabilities. Minnesota's VR Community is strongly encouraged to explore and participate in this program at whatever level makes sense for their organization whether that be locally, regionally, statewide or nationally.